1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

stated that in 1744 thirty-three Frenchmen visited the Comanches on the R. Jicarilla at the head of the Canadien; east of Taos, and traded them guns. A few years later we read in the Texas Annals that the Comanche are pressing down to Red River, forcing the Lipans into Texas.[3]

Nevertheless, Comanche contacts with the southwest and Texas were merely peripheral at this early date. Archaeology,[4] native tradition, and the evidence of cultural and linguistic analysis all combine to indicate a more northerly location for the Comanches of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Comanches are clearly an offshoot of the northern Shoshoneans.

The languages of the Comanche and northern Shoshone are mutually intelligible, the differences being found in slight phonetic shifts, not in grammatical morphology. Together with the Gosiute and Shikaviyam tongues of the peoples of the Great Basin, the Shoshonean and Comanche speech form the *Plateau Shoshonean* of the great Uto-Aztekan linguistic stock.[5] The Comanche speech points to a northern identity.

Ancient traditions of the Flathead Indians in the north define the presence of Shoshonean tribes far east of the Rocky Mountains in the territory of the upper Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. This was for the period preceding the eighteenth century. The Shoshoneans mentioned were probably the forebears of the Comanches.[6]

Shoshone and Comanche legends retain the tradition of the separation. The culture of the Comanche tribe in the third quarter of the nineteenth century—the period from which the materials of this study derive—was a growth developing from the Shoshonean base under the impact of new influences met with on the Plains and in the Southwest.

First among these influences were war and the horse. Aggression from the northeast and the lure of trade and loot in the southwest drew the Comanches to the Spanish frontier, where they became one of the earliest tribes to acquire horses. By adjusting itself to a horse and buffalo economy, Comanche society attained a mobility and plentitude unknown to the northern Shoshones. Fortified with these resources and ultimately with guns, stiffened

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[3] G. B. Grinnell, *Who Were the Padoucas?* (American Anthropologist, vol. 22, 1920), p. 260.

[4] W. D. Strong, *Plains Culture in the Light of Archaeology* (American Anthropologist, vol. 35, 1933), pp. 271-287.

[5] Edward Sapir, *Southern Paiute, A Shoshonean Language* (Proceedings, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol. 65, No. 1, 1930), pp. 5–6.

[6] J. A. Teit, *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau* (Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, vol. 44, 1928), pp. 304–305.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

by the aid and example of their Kiowa associates with whom they ended their enmity in 1790,[7] the Comanches succeeded in adopting the war patterns of the Plains with complete success. The war ideal permeated male behavior and markedly colored their legal system. Out of this matrix the Comanche brought new and significant legal forms. The society was in a dynamic state of flux; institutions were not sharply drawn, nor were the Comanches generally conscious of the configuration of their own social forms. They lived a hard, fast-moving life in a world of change, in which the individual loomed large as the important social unit.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION

There was no political unit which could be termed the Comanche tribe. The tribe was no more than a congerie of bands held together as a peace-group by the bonds of a common tongue and culture. There appears to have been no machinery for institutionalized political action on a tribal scale. It is the present belief of the Comanches that Echo Of The Wolf's Howl[8] convened the first tribal council of the Comanches in order to debate the problem of peace with the United States at the time of the proposal of the Medicine Lodge Treaty in 1876. War between the several bands never occurred, although the warriors of the Swift Stingers band joined with the United States Army as scouts in the actions against the other Comanches in the 1870's. They are still thoroughly disliked by all other Comanches.

The population of the Comanche tribe was distributed among a number of autonomous bands, each loosely organized and each centering its activities in a vaguely defined territory within the Comanche country.[9]

The Comanche band, or local group, ranged in size from a single family camping alone, through the small camp of related individuals who formed a composite extended family, up to the large band of several hundred persons.

Clan organization was absent. The kinship principle was weak even within the extended family band.[10] For though groups of relatives tended to

[7] James Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowa* (Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, vol. 17, 1898), pp. 162–165.

[8] A phonetic transcription of personal names used in this monograph is given in Appendix C.

[9] Mooney's estimate as to the prehistoric Comanche population is 7,000 for the year 1690. *The Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico* (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, vol. 80, 1928), p. 13. In 1892 the population was 1,545. (Mooney, *Calendar History*, p. 235).

[10] Comanche kinship usages have been analysed by the author and compared to those of the Shoshone. Cf. E. A. Hoebel, *Comanche and Hɨkandikka Shoshone Relationship Systems* (American Anthropologist, vol. 41, 1939), pp. 440–457.

The Comanches

● 174 The Comanches were relatively late arrivals in the South Plains. It has been suggested that they were encountered by Coronado and that previously they had made inroads on the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, but the evidence is thin.[6] When first definitely identified by the whites, they were so closely associated with the Shoshones culturally and linguistically that it was impossible to distinguish between the two. At that time the "Shoshones" covered a vast area, including most of Wyoming, the entire central and southern parts of Idaho except for a portion occupied by the Bannock, northeastern Nevada, a small strip of Utah west of Great Salt Lake, the headwaters of the Snake and Green rivers, the upper Platte down to the vicinity of the junction of the North and South forks, part of western Kansas, and the Missouri River from the headwaters eastward for some distance. Lewis and Clark in 1805 found bands of Shoshones on the headwaters of the Missouri in what is now western Montana. They had been driven from their eastern home along the Missouri by the hostile Atsinas and Siksikas, who had by that time obtained firearms from traders to the east.[7]

The language and culture of the Comanches point directly to a Shoshonean origin for the tribe. History also substantiates an origin in Shoshone country. According to Crow tradition, the Comanches once inhabited the Snake River region. Omaha tradition places them on the Middle Loup River probably until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[8] By 1700, a noticeable shift toward the south had begun to take place. La Sever's map (1701) places the Comanches near the headwaters of the Arkansas, principally on the north side, at about its closest point to the *Grande Rivière Cansez* (Kansas River).[9] Étienne Veniard de Bourgmond in 1724 found Comanche villages on the upper Kansas River along the route that later became the Santa Fé

[6] G. P. Winship, "The Coronado Expedition," B. A. E. *Fourteenth Annual Report*, Part I, 523–24; J. P. Harrington, "The Ethnogeography of the Tewa Indians," B. A. E. *Twenty-ninth Annual Report*, 477–78.

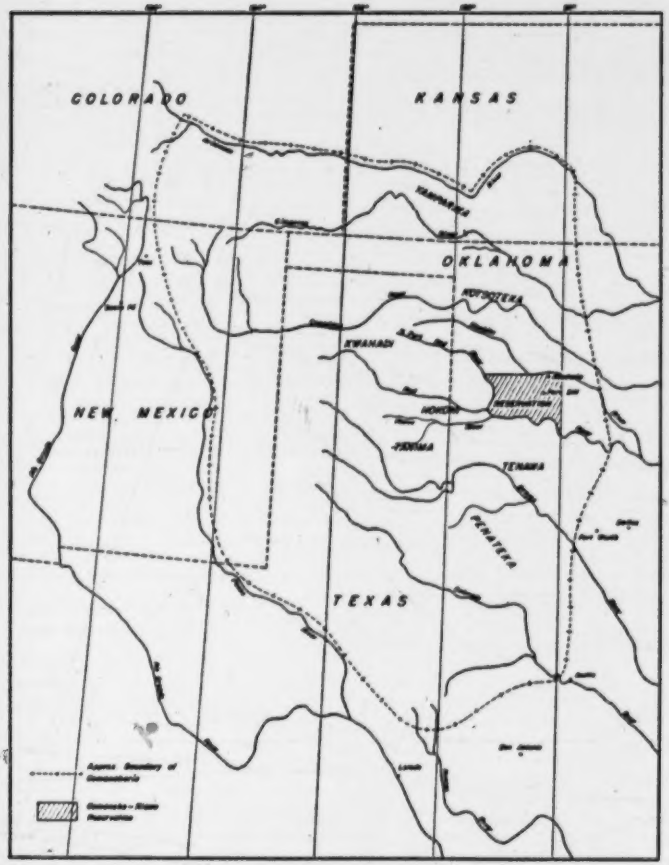
[7] Thomas Jefferson, *Message from the President of the United States Communicating Discoveries Made in Exploring the Missouri, Red River and Washita by Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley, and Mr. Dunbar*, 60; Farnham, *op. cit.*, I, 261.

[8] J. W. Powell, "Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico," B. A. E. *Seventh Annual Report*, 109.

[9] Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Pawnee Archeology," B. A. E. *Bulletin No. 112*, p. 4, map 4. The map is reproduced from a copy in the South Dakota Collection, I, 49.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

Comanchería



131
174

The Comanche Country

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

174 Trail, and located the tribe as occupying the territory between the headwaters of the Platte and the Kansas rivers.[10]

According to their own accounts, the Comanches came from the Rocky Mountain country north of the headwaters of the Arkansas to the valley of that stream in what is now eastern Colorado and western Kansas about 1700, having previously occupied the more northern region with the Shoshones. Their account is fairly well substantiated by historical records, and they were unquestionably identified in New Mexico in 1705.[11] So devastating were their incursions into New Mexico in the following years that a punitive expedition was sent against them into Colorado in 1719. No Comanches were found, but rumors were heard of French traders who were active among them to the northeast. Consequently, in the following year the Villasur expedition was dispatched to check the French. The venture met disaster on the Platte, and before the Spaniards could recover, the Comanches had moved into the territory of present eastern Colorado, southern Kansas, western Oklahoma, and northwestern Texas. For control of this territory the Comanches waged a long but successful triangular war with the Jumano allies of the French on their east, the Spaniards and their Indian allies in New Mexico, and the Apaches to the south. The Jumanos were never very formidable; Spanish power in the north was on the decline, and the Spanish system of control was not adequate to the Great Plains. The Apaches, after fierce resistance, were defeated. They retreated, leaving much of their Texas territory to the Comanches. Although Governor Don Juan Bautista de Anza of New Mexico as late as 1786 still held the opinion that the Comanche stronghold was in what is now the state of Colorado, north of the Napestle (Arkansas) River, the Comanches, two decades before that time, had established their supremacy as far south as the San Saba country of Texas. Soon after the turn of the century, American explorers reported them between the Arkansas and the Río Grande,

[10] Henri Folmer, "Etienne Veniard De Bourgmond in the Missouri Country," *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. XXXVI (April, 1942), 290–94; Powell, "Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico," *loc. cit.*, 109; James Mooney, "Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians," B. A. E. *Seventeenth Annual Report*, Part I, 161.

[11] Ralph E. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, II, 301; Alfred B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, 1777–1778*, 57.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

extending from the headwaters of the latter eastward into the Great Plains.[12] 174 ●

The backbone formed by the Rocky Mountain chain was apparently the shielded route used by most of the Comanches in their movement toward the South Plains, for Pike, Lalande, Pursely, Chouteau and DeMun, James, and others mention the Comanches' and Snakes' using trails along the edge of the mountains on their frequent journeys from the Platte to the Arkansas River and to New Mexico. Bandelier recorded that in 1744 thirty-three Frenchmen visited a Comanche village near Taos on a tributary stream near the head of the Canadian and traded the inhabitants guns, but a few years later the stronghold of the latter was to the east in what is now Oklahoma and Texas.

Any attempt to explain why the Comanches and the Shoshones separated is largely inferential. But if we may accept one Comanche tradition, the split occurred as the result of a dispute over the distribution of a bear which the Comanches had killed. The misunderstanding is supposed to have occurred on Fountain Creek north of Pueblo, Colorado, in the edge of the mountains.[13] Unable to reconcile their differences, the Comanches drifted southward while the Shoshones gradually shifted to the north and west.

A somewhat more plausible legendary account was given to the Santa Fé Laboratory of Anthropology group in 1933 by Post Oak Jim, then aged sixty-four. It is as follows:

« « « Two bands were living together in a large camp. One band was on the east side; the other on the west. Each had its own chief. 174 539

Every night the young boys were out playing games—racing, and so forth. They were having a kicking game; they kicked each other. One boy kicked another over the stomach so hard that he died from it. That boy who was killed was from the West camp. He was the son of a chief.

When this thing happened, the West camp cried all night. In

[12] Jefferson, *op. cit.*, 1, 78.

[13] G. B. Grinnell, "Who Were the Padoucas?" *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXII (1920), 260.

The Comanches

174 the East camp it was silent. Next day, they buried that boy.

539 The boy's father, the chief, had his crier go around announcing that there would be a big fight to see which camp was best so as to settle the question of his son's death. There was big excitement. Both sides had good warriors. The East camp ran to its horses. "If they really mean what they say, they will kill us," they cried.

The two sides lined up, and the chiefs met in the center. Then an old man from the East camp came up into the center. He wept and told them it wasn't right for them to fight among themselves like that. They took pity on him. Then other old men came out and gathered with him. "You have plenty of enemies to fight," they cried. "These were just boys playing a game. Don't take this thing so seriously. You are setting a bad example for the children. Whatever this chief wants to keep the peace, we'll do it."

That chief called it off. He said he did not realize what he was doing. So the East camp brought them horses and other things.

After that the chief had his announcer tell the people it was time to move camp. "We have had bad luck here. There has been hard feeling." While they were still there, smallpox broke out.

Then they broke up. One group went north; those are the Shoshones. The other group went west. » » »

174 Simple legendary explanations never tell the whole story, however, for many factors are at work when a people is on the move. It is most probable that the Comanche migration to the South Plains was in part forced by the incursion of more powerful tribes equipped with muskets coming from the northeast. Quarrels may have given no more than the impetus to split the groups.

It was an aggressive southward movement of the Blackfeet and a western advance by the Crows and other eastern tribes that forced the peoples occupying the western fringe of the plains between latitudes forty-three and fifty-two to retire toward the south, west and northwest. According to Flathead tradition, shortly after this eastern impact the Shoshone-Comanches disappeared from the vicinity of the Missouri.[14]

[14] James A. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau: The Flathead Group," B. A. E. *Forty-fourth Annual Report*, 304, 318.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

174

However, the southward migration cannot be explained altogether as the result of superior enemy pressure alone. The Comanches had obtained the horse, being among the first tribes of the plains to do so, and the desire for a more abundant supply of horses was certainly an important motive for moving closer to the source of supply: the Southwest.

Of the Shoshones, starving and pitiful, whom Lewis and Clark finally found in the mountains of Idaho, the captains observed, "Within their own recollection they formerly lived in the plains, but they have been driven into the mountains by the Pawkees, or the roving Indians of the Sascatchawain, and are now obliged to visit occasionally, and by stealth, the country of their ancestors."[15] And in explanation of this state of affairs, "they [the Shoshones] complain that the Spaniards refuse to let them have firearms. . . . In the meantime, say the Shoshonees, we are left to the mercy of the Minnetarees, who, having firearms, plunder them of their horses and put them to death without mercy."

The gun was the crucial factor, as was clearly recognized by the headman, Cameahwait, who declared fiercely, "But this should not be, if we had guns; instead of hiding ourselves in the mountains and living like bears on roots and berries, we would then go down and live in the buffaloe country in spite of our enemies, whom we never fear when we meet them on equal terms."[16]

The Comanches escaped this pressure by drifting southward into relatively unoccupied areas, where they finally consolidated their position against all comers. Furthermore, once they had horses, they could really launch forth on a buffalo-based economy, and the buffalo was ever present to the south. Thus, "I do not believe the Comanches were driven into the country," declares Professor R. N. Richardson. "On the contrary, it seems that they visited it, found that it was well suited to their mode of existence, and proceeded to fight for it and take it."[17] While taking the more desirable country, they abandoned the less desirable northern territory, and they were better off because of this action.

[15] Lewis and Clark, *op. cit.*, I, 445.

[16] *Ibid.*, 450.

[17] R. N. Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement*, 19.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The Comanches

●174 By 1836 the Comanches claimed and occupied all the country from the Arkansas River on the north to the Mexican settlements on the south, and from the Grand Cordillera on the west to the Cross Timbers on the east, according to the report of the United States Indian agent for the Osages.[18] Actually, however, the territory occupied was hardly that extensive. Comanchería, the land of the Comanches, may reasonably be said to have been in the mid-nineteenth century the vast South Plains area bounded on the north by the Arkansas River, on the west by a line extending from the headwaters of the Arkansas River southward near the Mexican settlements of Taos and Santa Fé, on the southwest by the Pecos River, on the southeast by the white settlements in the vicinity of San Antonio, Fredericksburg, and Austin, and on the east by the Cross Timbers, or approximately along a line slightly west of the ninety-eighth meridian: an area more than six hundred miles from north to south and four hundred miles from east to west. Although they shared parts of this vast country with the Kiowas and the Wichitas, it was theirs to have and to hold. Outsiders, red or white, who entered it did so at their peril.

133 What was the country like? It is generally level. The eastern portion is slightly rolling with an occasional range of rugged hills. And in the east-central section the solid masses of the Wichita Mountains, geologically one of the oldest exposed land masses in the United States, rise sharply from the plains. The western part is the level tableland of the *Llano Estacado* or Staked Plains. A number of rivers cut southeastward across Comanchería, but even so the distances between them are relatively great. From north to south, the Arkansas, Cimarron, Canadian, Washita, Red, Pease, Brazos, Colorado, and Pecos constitute the major streams. They are low-banked, sand-filled, and sinuous; and because of the gypsum and other minerals contained in their waters, they are not satisfactory for drinking. In the areas contiguous to the headwaters of the streams are escarpments, arroyos, buttes, and canyons. These "breaks" are generally barren and desolate, but contain small running streams and springs that provide an occasional oasis with drinking water, grass, and cottonwood. They give

[18] P. L. Chouteau, agent for the Osages, to Governor M. Stokes and General M. Arbuckle, April 25, 1836 (MS copy in National Archives, Western Superintendency file, Office of Indian Affairs, Washington).

The Comanches

The family headmen - and there was at least one for each group -
622 were the peace, or civil, chiefs. When the large band was functioning
623 as a unit, it contained several peace chiefs, one of whom was recognized as the head chief of the band. The rest formed an advisory council to the leader and at the same time maintained their positions as family headmen.

184 Although the various bands had cultures so similar that it was
619 extremely difficult for the uninitiated to differentiate among them,
621 each band had certain peculiarities which served to identify its members in any company. Each had its favorite dance.[10] One band habitually made clothing from antelope skins, although the others preferred deer skins. One made no pemmican, another made it without berries, and a third always added berries.[11] The southern groups were thought to prefer darker clothing than their northern kinsmen.[12] There were also slight differences in speech. For instance, the Wasp band members (Southern Comanche) pronounced their words more slowly than the Antelope band of the Staked Plains.[13] Bands also differed in a number of cultural aspects less easily recognized, such as magical techniques, sexual attitudes, and character traits. Cultural differences persisted, although it was mandatory upon an individual to follow the customs of the group with which he lived in order to be socially accepted by his new associates, and this despite the frequent exchange of band allegiance and the interband marriages. The extent of cultural differences at present corresponds somewhat to that in the United States between North and South or East and West. All the older Comanche informants were as conscious of the differences as a Texan in Boston. "That was —— [name of band] way" was a very common reply of informants to questions or comments. Notwithstanding these and other slight differences that may have existed, there was, on the whole, little gross variation in habits, customs, and institutions.

● 194 Only the larger bands received permanent recognition and a name.
619 Before the close of the eighteenth century, the Spaniards in New

[10] R. H. Lowie, "Dances and Societies of the Plains Shoshone," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, XI, Part 10 (1916), 809–12.

[11] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, 221.

[12] W. B. Parker, *Notes Taken During the Expedition Commanded by Captain R. B. Marcy Through Unexplored Texas, in the Summer and Fall of 1854*, 202.

[13] Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement*, 17–18.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The People

Mexico spoke of three major bands. For a time, the Anglo-Americans designated three divisions—Northern, Middle, and Southern—but as they came to know the Comanches better, the practice was replaced by the use of definite band names. Robert S. Neighbors, in 1860, was able to identify eight bands. James Mooney listed thirteen, but Robert H. Lowie, in 1912, recorded only four. R. B. Thomas, who lived with the Comanches for many years during the early reservation period, knew of twelve bands, six of which had already been absorbed or exterminated;[14] and at the time of the work of the Santa Fé Laboratory Field Study Group in 1933, living Comanches still remembered thirteen.[15] Multiple names are usually recorded for a band, and in some instances it is impossible to determine whether two names refer to the same or different bands. Regardless of how many bands there may have been, during the nineteenth century there were five outstanding divisions, the others being small or transitory groupings.

The largest and best-known divisions of all the Comanches was the *Pɛnatɜkə*, or Honey-Eaters. Other names by which the band was known include *Teyuwit* (Hospitable), *Tekapwai* (No Meat), *Kuβatatpat* (Steep Climbers), *Pɛnanɜ* (Wasp or Quick-stinger, i.e., Raiders), and *Ho'is* (Timber People). This band led in the southward migration and lived adjacent to the Spanish and Texas settlements in the vicinity of the Cross Timbers belt and along the headwaters of the central Texas rivers. A map of the country between the frontiers of Arkansas and New Mexico, based on the expeditions of Captain Marcy from 1849 to 1852, locates the Southern Comanches, or Wasps, between the Pecos River and Fort Phantom Hill.[16] Their residence in the timber belt explains some of the various names by which they were called. They lived near the settlements and associated more with the Caddos, Wichitas, and whites in historic times than with their western and northern kinsmen. Early references by the whites to the Comanches pertain largely to this band. According to their own traditional accounts, the Wasps had moved so far away that for a long time they had no contact with other Comanche groups. They were

[14] R. B. Thomas, "Kiowa-Comanche Experiences," *loc. cit.*, 153.

[15] E. A. Hoebel, *The Political Organization and Law-Ways of the Comanche Indians*, 12–13.

[16] Annie H. Abel (ed.), *The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun*, map (unattached).

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

rediscovered by the Yap-eaters (*Yamparikə*) and Antelope bands (*Kwɜharɛnə*), who went far southward into Mexico on a raiding expedition. The relationship was restored, and thereafter they maintained a loose alliance with their western and northern kinsmen.[17] But still they were distinct enough to help the United States troops against other Comanches—a fact remembered with bitterness by members of other bands to this very day.

Another Comanche band which the Anglo-Americans came to know well, though unfavorably, was the Those Who Move Often (*Nɔyɛka*), or *Nɔkoni* (Those Who Turn Back). Although all Comanches were nomadic, these were the real gypsies of the tribe. "They always turned back before they got to where they were going," said Eagle Tail Feather; but it is more likely that they were just drifting about, not going any place in particular. After the death of a chief who bore the same name as his band (*Nɔkoni*), because of the tabu forbidding the speaking of a dead person's name, the band became known as *Dɜtsanɔyɛka* (Wanderers Who Make Bad Camps); they moved so much that they were slovenly in their camp habits.

In 1786, Governor Don Juan Bautista de Anza of New Mexico stated that most of the Wanderers were located between the Arkansas and the Red rivers, but that their camps were to be found across Texas as far south as the banks of the Pecos. During the nineteenth century the Wanderers generally ranged immediately north of the Wasps. Together with some of their neighbors, the *Tenawa* and the *Tanima* (Liver-eaters), they composed the group referred to as the Middle Comanches. The map based on the expeditions and accounts of Captain Marcy, 1849–52, shows the Middle Comanches along the headwaters of the Red River for about one hundred miles southward to the headwaters of the Brazos (Main, Double Mountain, Clear Fork, Salt Fork, and Middle Fork) River in the region between Fort Phantom Hill and Fort Belknap.[18] Their favorite retreat and stronghold was in the breaks of the Pease River country where they found protection from the blizzards and safety from pursuing enemies.

Another powerful band was that of the Buffalo-eaters (*Kutsuɛka*),

[17] Agent E. L. Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "Report," May 18, 1881 (Oklahoma Historical Society Library, correspondence file K–13).

[18] Abel, *The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun*, map.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

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so named because they always had plenty of buffalo meat. Buffalo meat was the principal food of all Comanches, but this particular division, whose favorite haunt during the nineteenth century was the Canadian River valley, may well have been more dependent upon that animal, since they were in a favorite rendezvous of the buffalo herds. They established relations with the Spaniards in New Mexico early in the eighteenth century, and after peace was established in 1786, *Comancheros* (traders from New Mexico settlements) visited them frequently and called them *Cuchaneo* or *Cuchantica*. The eastern and southern members of this group likewise came to be well known to the Spaniards in Texas; in fact, they are commonly referred to in the documents of the Bexar archives as Texas or Eastern Comanches. They were noted as a band which was ever out on a raid. An emissary, Francisco Xavier Ortiz, whom Governor de Anza sent in 1786 to visit them, reported that in an area about one hundred miles square between the Pecos and Red rivers, he found eight *rancherías;* that the smallest had thirty tents; all eight together had about seven hundred. He further reported that there were three to four warriors to the tent, which would give an estimated population of between six and seven thousand; on the basis of what we know about the Comanches, this was an exaggeration, although his claim that they owned nine hundred horses and mules is quite credible.[19]

The northernmost part of the Comanche country was occupied by the populous and important band of "Yap-eaters," *Yapainə*, or *Yamparikə*, eaters of a potato-like root called *Yɛp* by the Shoshones, but *Yap'* by the Comanches. As the band closest to the Shoshones, and as the band that clung to Shoshone food-getting habits, digging for roots, they were probably the last of the Comanche bands to break off. Indeed, the Fort Hall Shoshones, in Idaho (who still think *they* are the people—*nɜm*) call all Comanches *Yamparika*. In earlier times this band had been called *Widyu* (Awl), according to Mooney, but because the use of the word became tabu, as in the case of the *Nokoni*, it was changed to *Ditsakana* (Sewers), which conveys the same idea.[20]

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[19] A. B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, 73, 290–91.

[20] Apparently also spelled *Titchakenah* (Those Who Make Bags While Moving). It is maintained on good authority that the *Titchakenah* was once a separate band who before the reservation days had become a portion of the *Yamparika* band. See Agent Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "Report," May 18, 1881, *loc. cit.*

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The Comanches

● 174 619 According to their own accounts, they came around 1700 from the Rocky Mountain country, north of the headwaters of the Arkansas River, to the valley of that stream in what is now eastern Colorado and western Kansas. Previously they had inhabited the country with the Shoshones. Governor Anza in 1786 located them as ranging across present northern Colorado and south to the Arkansas River. The accounts indicate, however, that the Yap-eaters felt at home south of that stream also. During the nineteenth century they camped generally on the south side of the Arkansas River and along the Canadian, the Arkansas being considered the northern boundary of their territory. They raided, however, far north of that stream across Kansas and Nebraska.

Another populous band, although little known until towards the close of the pre-reservation period, is the Antelope or *Kwɜharɛnɔ*. The name of the band is indicative of its life on the open plains where antelope were plentiful. And because they lived and traveled on the [293] glaring, treeless plains, these Comanches carried on their backs a square of rawhide that could be held over the head as a sunshade. Hence they were also nicknamed *Kwahihɜkɛnɔ*, "Sunshades on Their Backs." William Clark called them Qua-he-hu-ke, which he said meant "back-shade," because in their treeless country the only way to shade the face was to turn one's back to the sun, but we doubt the correctness of this interpretation.[21] Before the Comanches migrated to the South Plains country, the Antelope band was located just south of the Yap-eaters. The two bands probably drifted south about the same time, and then the Antelopes made the *Llano Estacado* their home and challenged all intruders. Within the wild depths of the Tule and Palo Duro canyons they found protection from the winter blizzards of the uplands and safety from their enemies until Colonel MacKenzie bearded them in their stronghold on September 27, 1874. They harried the frontier of Texas as much, perhaps, as any other Comanche band, and they were the last of the Comanches to submit to the efforts of the United States to bring them under control. For years they scoffed at their beef-eating kinsmen on the reservation, and did not submit until they had been drubbed repeatedly by superior military forces. It has been argued that present-day Comanche

[21] W. P. Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, 119.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

dialects, traditions, and customs are largely Antelope.[22] To what extent this is true is impossible to judge, but even a casual student of Comanche culture cannot fail to note that the influence of the Antelope band is strong. These people are reluctant to accept innovations to this day, a few still preferring the tipi and the arbor to the modern house.

In addition to the above-mentioned major groups, there were a great many bands of less importance. Some of these are difficult to distinguish because of similarity of band names and variations in spelling the same name, and also because some bands had become extinct or had merged with others before becoming known to whites.

The *Tanima* (Liver-eaters), mentioned by James Mooney, were so called because they are reputed to have eaten the liver of their game in its raw state. Although Mooney found only one survivor at the time of his visit, Agent E. L. Clark reported several survivors living with other bands in 1881,[23] and Goldstein was able to identify the band in 1931. The Liver-eaters were neighbors of the Wanderers and with them composed a part of the group known as Middle Comanches.

A third band which lived in the same region as the Wanderers and the Liver-eaters was the *Tenawa* or *Tenawit* (Down Stream), also noted by Mooney. The *Tenawa* and *Tanima* were frequently confused by the whites, partly because of the similarity of the sound of the names and partly because they inhabited the same geographic region. So confused are the accounts of the two that it is often impossible to determine to which band the name refers.[24] The Down Streams were practically exterminated in a battle with the Mexicans about 1845, and the band did not exist when the Comanches went on the reservation in 1869, or else they had been absorbed by other bands. R. N. Richardson believes that the Yupes or Jupes listed by Governor Anza as one of three major divisions known to the Spaniards in New Mexico in 1786 were the *Tenawa*.[25] The Liver-eaters

[22] R. B. Thomas, "Kiowa-Comanche Experiences," *loc. cit.*

[23] Agent Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "Report," May 18, 1881, *loc. cit.*

[24] Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement*, 21, lists the following variations of the two words and states that it is an incomplete list: Te-na-wish, Ta-ne-wa, Te-ne-wah, Te-na-wa, Tan-nee-wish, Ten-en-e-ree, Te-ne-mes, and De-na-vi.

[25] *Ibid.*, 20–22.

The Comanches

●174 619 and Down Streams often camped with the Wasps and were probably strongly influenced by them.

The *Itɛta'o* habitually put up more pemmican than they could eat in a winter. They threw the surplus out in the spring, and other Comanches, seeing their dumps of dried, black meat along the trails, dubbed them *Itɛta'o,* "Burnt Meat."

The *Wɔ'ai* carried a name meaning "Wormy," but more inelegantly, according to That's It, the full name means "Maggots on the Penis." They are supposed to have married incestuously, and hence they were also scornfully called *Namaɜ'ɜnɔ*, "Something together" or "Intercourse." Mooney reported them to be extinct at the time of the reservation period, but the Santa Fé Laboratory Field Group was able to record evidence of them in 1933. There were a few living in the vicinity of Geronimo, Oklahoma, in 1945, and only a few of the older tribal informants had no knowledge of this band.

The *Mutsanɜ* (Undercut Bank) were so called because their favorite camp site was underneath an overhanging cliff. According to Mooney, who called them *Mot-sai,* they were annihilated in a battle with the Mexicans sometime around 1845, presumably suffering the same fate as the Down Stream band. Mooney also identified a group which he called *Pagatsu* (Head of the Stream), probably the same band as that recorded by the Santa Fé Laboratory group as *Panaixtɜ* (Those Who Live Upstream).

A band famous among the Comanches but little known to whites was the Water Horse (*Pahuraix*). According to That's It, who was a member of this band, these people were taller and slimmer than most other Comanches. They were reputedly great runners who excelled at lacrosse. They bet prodigiously on their prowess, and like the Lamarkian giraffe they are supposed to have gotten their height by stretching—they piled their bets so high! In time, on account of their propensity for huge stakes and their unbeatable skill at lacrosse, other bands refused to play them. Robert S. Neighbors says that they were called *Par-kee-na-um* (Water People) because they usually camped near lakes and streams.

The *Wia'nɜ* (Hill Wearing Away) was a very small band of six or seven families which camped in a gap between a large hill and a rapidly eroding smaller one.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The People

Mooney and Neighbors both listed a few Comanche bands that were not noted by any other reporters. Mooney's *Pohoi* (Wild Sage) were nothing more than some Wind River Shoshones who joined with the Comanches. Neighbors mentions a *No-na-um* band, who he said "live in the high prairie where there is no timber or running water, and never leave that kind of country." He also notes an *It-chit-a-bud-ah* (Cold People) band and a *Hai-ne-na-une* (Corn-eaters). All of these later groups were of little importance or had by mid-nineteenth century been absorbed or otherwise become extinct.

How many people all these bands added up to is hard to say. At best the Comanche tribe was never very large. Mooney estimated its population to be 7,000 in 1690.[26] Governor Anza of New Mexico reported that Comanches visiting Santa Fé and Pecos Pueblo in the first half of the year of 1786 included twenty-three chiefs representing 593 lodges or around 6,000 persons. In the same year Anza's emissary, Francisco Xavier Ortiz, reported that he visited an area about one hundred miles square north and east of the Pecos River where he found eight villages of "Kotsoteka," containing a population of 6,000 to 7,000.[27] The figure given by Ortiz is quite likely exaggerated, but if it is approximately correct, then the tribe at that time could have numbered as many as 20,000 to 30,000.

It was several years after the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory that government agents learned much about the Comanches. One of the first reliable estimates of their military strength was by P. L. Chouteau, agent for the Osages. He wrote in 1836, "The numerical military forces of the Comanches (which includes all males old enough and not too old to bear arms) is estimated, and always has been, by the Mexican Government at 8,000, but from my personal observation, I have been induced to calculate the number of Comanche warriors at 4,500."[28] In the following year United States military authorities estimated the number of warriors at about 5,400.[29] Based upon the figures given by Chouteau and Bonville, the population of

[26] James Mooney, "The Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, Vol. LXXX, No. 7, 13.

[27] A. B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, 290–91, 325, 327.

[28] Agent Chouteau to Stokes and Arbuckle, April 25, 1836, *loc. cit.*

[29] B. L. E. Bonville, captain, Seventh Infantry, to Commissioner, General Roger Jones, January 24, 1837 (MS copy, Oklahoma Historical Society Library, Archives, I).

The Comanches

171 dians? Above all, it was the horse-buffalo-tipi complex, in which they equaled or surpassed all other Indians. In horses they were the richest of all tribes; in fact *they* introduced the horse into the plains and they were the medium through which most other Indians received their mounts (at the expense of the Texans and Mexicans). If the horse was the critical factor in later Plains culture, then the Comanches, although they were in other aspects imitators, were in this one very significant aspect the great innovators. Of buffalo they had a plethora and were more richly supplied than the tribes farther north. In warfare no one surpassed them. They were, indeed, typical enough, even without warrior societies and the Sun Dance.

172 Just prior to the introduction of the horse there were very few
●174 nomadic Indians out on the plains proper. In the moist millenia immediately following the retreat of the fourth (Wisconsin) glaciation, a thin veneer of paleolithic hunters, called the Paleo-Indians, spread out across the plains from the eastern slopes of the Rockies. Their epoch lasted from perhaps 20,000 B.C. to around 10,000, during which the archaeological cultures of Folsom and Yuma dominated the scene. From 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1,000 a series of transitory cultures of nomadic, pre-pottery, pre-gardening societies, called collectively *lithic*, vacillated back and forth as wet periods and alternating Dust Bowl climates made habitation of the plains possible or nearly untenable. Beginning about A.D. 500 emigrants from the Woodlands of the Mississippi Valley and east brought gardening to the river bottoms of the Missouri and its tributaries. These people and their protohistoric successors lived in settled villages of earth lodges or grass-domed houses, growing corn, squash, maize, and tobacco. When they traveled, they went afoot. They hunted the buffalo and the antelope, but always near home and apparently by driving them into funnel-shaped corrals that opened on a bluff over which the stampeding animals would tumble to their deaths. The buffalo was important to their economy, but not critically so. They also fought, but war was stylized and formal and not a central interest.[1]

177 The coming of the horse from the Southwest and the westward displacement of tribes by the pressures of Eastern Indians armed with guns changed all this, beginning in the seventeenth century.

[1] J. D. Jennings, *Plainsmen of the Past: A Review of the Prehistory of the Plains.*

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

231 some of which escaped and became truly wild. Others were stolen. Most of the horses to reach the plains at an early date probably came by way of New Mexico.

231 174 Available evidence indicates that the Plains Indians began using horses some time after 1600. None of the tribes could be classed as having a horse culture before 1630, and probably not until after 1650.[6] Once the Indians of the South came to use horses, the spread northward was rapid. By 1659 Indians to the northwest of the Spanish settlements in New Mexico were raiding the ranch stock, and within another five years raiding was common practice. A significant number of horses, no doubt, were captured by the Indians in the revolt of 1680 in New Mexico, and it is likely that many of these fell into the hands of Plains Indians either as a result of trade or of plunder. In 1675 Fernando del Bosque found no trace of horses or horse-using Indians while exploring along the Río Grande from the mouth of the Conchos to the Pecos River and eastward. The Mendoza-López expedition eight years later likewise found the banks of the Río Grande still barren, but as it progressed northeastward, it encountered Indians with a few horses. The Spanish expedition into East Texas in 1690 found a few horses near the mouth of the Colorado River, and in the same year it was reported that about thirty were seen near the Arkansas-Texas boundary and that the Caddo to the west had four or five per lodge.[7]

All the tribes west of the Missouri had horses when first encountered by the French and English. The Pawnees and other tribes along the Missouri had horses as early as 1680. Du Tisne in 1719 reported that two villages of Pawnees in Oklahoma near the Arkansas River had three hundred horses, which were highly valued and not for sale. By 1724 the edge of the horse belt had reached the neighborhood of the junction of the Kansas and Missouri rivers. By 1754 the Blackfeet had horses in general use both for pack and for riding, having obtained their supply from the Shoshones or Comanches. By 1770 the dispersion had reached its northern limit except for a small extension

[6] Francis Haines, "Where Did the Plains Indians Get Their Horses," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XL (1938), 112–17.

[7] Haines, "The Northward Spread of Horses among the Plains Indians," *loc. cit.*, 429–32.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

into the timbered area. The Shoshones of Idaho had obtained their horses by the route west of the continental divide about 1690 to 1700, or approximately twenty years before horses had reached the junction of the Kansas and Missouri rivers.

Ponca tradition credits the Comanches with having the first horses seen by the people of their tribe. According to it, the Comanches at the time fought on horseback, using the long-handled stone battle-axe as their principal weapon. Furthermore, the Poncas claim that the Comanches had thick covers of overlapping pieces of rawhide to protect the breasts and sides of their animals. The Comanches taught the Poncas how to ride and to use the horse as a beast of burden. Soon afterwards they left the country, and the Poncas knew not where they went.[8]

The Comanches probably acquired horses as early as, or before, the Shoshones. They certainly had them by the time they moved into the South Plains. They were raiding in New Mexico in 1705. The next year, the Apaches in the northeastern part of that province suffered from Comanche horse-raiding expeditions. Comanche raiding in New Mexico apparently became progressively more frequent, for in 1719 the governor of the province sent a punitive expedition against the Comanches in an attempt to check the forays.

How many horses the Comanches accumulated is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Clinton Smith reported that his band had about 6,000 head, about one-half of which were the property of the chief; and that sometimes within a single night horses by the thousands were captured or stolen.[9] Captain Marcy estimated that the most successful warriors owned from fifty to two hundred animals each. By comparison, a Sioux considered himself wealthy if he owned thirty to forty.[10] The Antelope band, with a population of less than two thousand, had about 15,000 horses and 300 to 400 head of mules in 1867. Modern Comanches say that A Big Fall By Tripping owned 1,500 horses at the time of his death, although he was so fat he could not ride a single one but had to travel sitting on a travois.

[8] Alice C. Fletcher and Frances La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," B. A. E. *Bulletin No. 27*, 79–80.

[9] Clinton and Jeff D. Smith, *The Boy Captives*, 50–51.

[10] Maximilian, Prince of Wied, *Travels in the Interior of America* (vol. I of Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*), 160.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

not ride a single one, but had to travel sitting on a travois. In comparison, the entire Pawnee tribe had 1,400, the Osage 1,200, and the Omaha 1,200. The greater the distance from Texas and Mexico, the fewer the horses found.

The number of horses possessed by the South Plains Indians decreased rapidly in the last half of the nineteenth century. The Antelope band surrendered only 1,500 head to the United States at the time of their capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[11] The Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, and Delaware tribes had 14,810 head in 1874, but three years later they possessed only 4,194. Subsequent to just one engagement, on the morning of September 28, 1874, the day after he had destroyed the Comanche-Kiowa-Cheyenne camp in Palo Duro Canyon, Colonel MacKenzie's troop shot and killed some 1,400 Indian horses.[12] Such attrition devastated the great herds.

The Comanches obtained their supply of horses by gift and trade, by breeding, by capturing wild ones, and by raiding.

It was considered a gracious gesture to give a favorite horse to a friend. And although it was general practice to kill a warrior's personal riding string on his grave, many a man before his death willed his favorite horse to his best friend. Even the poorest had at least one horse, for the public approved the rich man who celebrated an important occasion by giving a horse to some poor old fellow who could not rustle one for himself.

In intertribal trading the Comanches exchanged horses for goods, but by 1850 they had so many horses themselves that they never bothered to trade for them. In the great peace-making in 1840 between the Cheyennes on the one side and the Comanches, Kiowas, and Kiowa-Apaches on the other, the Cheyennes gave guns, blankets, calico, beads, and brass kettles, while the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches offered horses. Mountain, the Kiowa spokesman, had said, "We all of us have many horses; as many as we need; we do not wish to accept any horses as presents, but we shall be glad to accept any other gifts. We, the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches, have made a road to give many horses to you when we come here." They were as good as his word; every Cheyenne man, woman, and child

[11] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1875, 273.
[12] Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 223.

6: Linton E-5 (1933) 1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

Apparently the purpose of the ceremony was partly to increase the importance of the medicine man, who remained the central figure throughout, partly to improve the well being of the whole group, especially their physical health. The dancers, as a result of their participation, received an increase in their supernatural power, but they seem to have drawn this from the medicine man rather than directly from the Sun, the Eagle, or any other supernatural being. This would be in accordance with the general Comanche pattern of obtaining power from other individuals more frequently than they obtained it by direct contact with supernatural beings. Visions might come to the dancers during the dance, but these were in the nature of unusual benefits not specifically sought for or expected. The only instance of such a vision which informants remembered was not that of a dancer but that of a man who impersonated the old bull in the initial ceremony of driving in the buffalo. At the end of the chase this man was so exhausted that, when he started out of the lodge, he partially lost consciousness and had to cling to the center pole. When he came to he told the people that he had had a vision of a white man with long white curly hair. The Comanche believe that this was Jesus, although it happened before missionaries had come among them. As they had had Christian Mexican captives living among them from at least 1750 on, they were probably familiar with Christian ideology even at that time. Since the Comanche are not secretive with regard to their visions or other supernatural experiences, the fact that this is the only Sun Dance vision remembered would indicate that such visions were very rare.

There is documentary evidence that the Comanche did not reach their historic territory until about 1700 and it seems highly probable that they had emerged from the northern plateau area only a few generations before. It is certain that during the historic period they were actively engaged in borrowing elements of Plains culture from their neighbors and that certain of these elements had not been perfectly assimilated at the time of their final subjugation. I believe that the rather wide range of variation in certain details of the Sun Dance, such as the form of the lodge, can best be explained by the assumption that the Comanche had not had the Sun Dance long enough to establish a complete and integrated pattern for the ceremony. If so, many of the details of particular Sun Dances might be determined largely by the officiating medicineman's knowledge of the Sun Dance rituals of neighboring tribes, especially the Kiowa and Cheyenne. Most of the older informants were familiar with the Kiowa Sun Dance and considered their own as very much the same. The use of a fan of roadrunner feathers to invigorate the dancers was cited as a specific identity. At the same time,

6: Linton E-5 (1933)1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

they stressed the fact that the Comanche did not use a Sun Dance image while the Kiowa did.

The material on which the preceding report is based was collected by the Ethnological Field Party of the Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fé, New Mexico, while working with the Comanche during the summer of 1933.

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[pp 429-end, not processed]

11: Casagrande E,L-5 (1940) 1954
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

121 The caveat that meanings do
825 change must be borne in mind, but by applying this principle one observes that Comanche has a great many unanalyzable stems for animals whose range includes, or in some cases is confined to,[142] a more northerly habitat, while the names of most animals indigenous to the Southwest are analyzable compounds, e.g., ʔevikuyú·si? *road-runner* (*green quail*); puhitó·? *turkey* (*grazes in the grass*); see also the words for
121 opossum (δ). On the basis of such evidence
174 one could postulate that the Comanche had moved into the Southwest from a more northerly location.[143]

121 The writer hopes the point has been made that an ethnolinguistic approach not only provides useful leads and insights into society and culture, but adds a new dimension to the study of acculturation as well.

[142] For example, tuhkU *moose*. Albert Gallatin, A Synopsis of the Indian Tribes North of Mexico, Trans. & Coll. of the Amer. Antiquarian Society, Vol. II, (Cambridge, Massachusetts; 1836), notes a Comanche word, augi, for *salmon*, a word that was obsolete in 1940.

[113] [143] Edward Sapir, Internal Linguistic Evidence Suggestive of the Northern Origin of the Navaho, AA 38: 224-235 (1936), brilliantly marshalls linguistic evidence which suggests an earlier northern location for the Navaho.

[p. 256-B]

12: Canonge L-5 (ca. 1950-1955) 1958 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

The indications of comparative linguistics are that they have had a long pre-history of mobility. Their closest linguistic relatives are the Wyoming Shoshone, from whom they must have separated shortly before Columbus. The first records already show the Comanche separated from these relatives by hundreds of miles. The Shoshone-Comanche may have formed a single group with the Mono-Paviotso group and with the Ute-Chemehuevis about 1000 years ago. Much farther back, their linguistic relatives include the Tubatulabals and the Cahuilla family in California, the Hopi and the Pima-Papago in the American Southwest and in the northern part of Mexico, the Yaqui-Tarahumara complex in northern Mexico, the Cora, the Huichol and the Nahuatls or Aztecs of Mexico. The time when all these groups were still a single unit goes far back, perhaps more than 4000 years ago, a time not much more recent than when English and the Germanic languages were one with the Celtic, the Italic, the Hellenic, the Baltic, the Slavic, the Iranian (including Persian) and the Indic (of India). There seems to be a certain rough parallel in these two groups, called the Uto-Aztekan and the Indo-European, in the fact that a few thousand years ago they began to expand and continued expanding down to recent times. Up to the time when Indo-European moved into America, the two stocks were fairly close together in the land area they had covered.

Morris Swadesh
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6

Plains Indian Law in Development: The Comanche

E. ADAMSON HOEBEL

Men have occupied the Great Plains of the West for a good ten thousand years or more. They came in, apparently, when the last ice sheet was in its northward retreat, and their archaeological culture seems to have been fairly stable over long periods of time. But the horse-riding, buffalo-hunting, tipi-dwelling culture of the eighteenth-century Plains Indian was something quite new in its development.

Before the coming of Columbus the Indians of the Plains were largely riverbound and not overly inclined to venture afar into the vast, poorly watered stretches of open grasslands. They had to go afoot.

The coming of the European altered the situation with drastic effect. The Spaniard to the south introduced the horse and thereby provided the means for extensive penetration of the Plains by native populations, for which the thick herds of buffalo and fleet antelope were an enticing lure. On the eastern frontier the French and British were working to cause a far-reaching displacement of the Woodland tribes. White settlements forced some tribes to move westward at an early date. And out beyond the frontier, other displacements were accelerated ahead of the line of settlement by the imperialistic rivalry of the fur trade.

The fur trading tribes sought ever to enlarge their trapping and hunt-

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31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

Comanche Origin

174 The Comanches' emergence probably occurred on the eastern fringes of the Basin area, somewhere in the vicinity of southwestern Montana and northwestern Wyoming. The specific area of Comanche birth would be impossible to pinpoint; however, judging from the range of the eastern Shoshone, the origin tales of the Comanches, and the Spanish records of New Spain, it can be suggested that the area of Wyoming between the Yellowstone and Platte Rivers may come close to defining the general vicinity of Comanche origin.

173 The most commonly recorded tale of Comanche origin tells of a dispute which arose among a large group of Indians who were traveling in the northwestern Wyoming area. Two factions of this group disagreed over the division of a game animal, usually identified as a bear. As a result, they separated. One group went north, and this group is now identified as the Shoshone. The other group turned south and east, and the tale states that this group was the Comanche.

The following is Sanapia's version of the origin of the Comanches. I include it here because it is an explanation of Comanche origin which to my knowledge has never been recorded and also because it illustrates a significant point with reference to Sanapia. The core reason for the eventual fracturing of the main group is attributed to disease. This type of explanation would seem most relevant to Sanapia as a doctor. This tale was taught to Sanapia by her mother, who in turn learned it from her father.

There was lots of groups of them at that time . . . by the thousands, here and there, just like that. They be on a river, east of those big mountains . . . Wyoming, I guess. This whole army of Indians, mens, womens, and childrens. 173 Somehow, I don't know how, they got a big sickness. It was this polio . . . some- 164 thing like that stuff, I think. Did you ever hear the like of that? It just twist their arms and their legs this way and that way. It twist their necks too. They act like that for about five minutes, and they just die. If they walking, fall right over and die where they are. The bottom of that place where they were camping was 173 just full of dead peoples. So this man, like a chief or something, got on his horse and rode around the camp and he was talking loud, you know. He said, "I want you all, this group, go south as far as you could go. If you don't, you are going to all die out soon." Then they all got on their horses with their wives and childrens and just left their tepee there or what they living in, them days. They just took out carrying nothing except their knives. They didn't even have nothing to carry water in. So that big camp went south just as far as they could go. Then that man said to some other people, "Now you all go west . . . right straight west just as far as you can go. When you come to the big mountains just go on the other side if you could get over. You other group, go northwest, way up that way. It'll be alright." And so they scattered like that . . . all those ways. Some of them was left and they said, "We going east." The chief said, No, don't go that way. That's white people's land. They be up that way when you get over there. They going to kill you all. You all go west just so far. When you hit a river just live there." So these other folks went southwest from there and northwest. They all scattered and went like that. These other ones that didn't believe him, well, they just died. Their bodies were everywhere. So lot of them end up in the mountains. Bunch went into Wyoming, I guess, and

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

177 contact with the Anglo-Americans. In the latter part of the eighteen century and
101 the early nineteenth century the Comanches had moved into an area which would roughly encompass southeastern Colorado, southwestern Kansas, central and western Oklahoma, and northern Texas. In fact, in 1834 General Leavenworth and Colonel Dodge met with a large encampment of northern Comanches about 10 miles north of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on Chandler Creek within a mile of where Sanapia's house now stands.

Relationship to Shoshone

121 To gain a full appreciation of the roots of historical and contemporary
[101] Comanche society, two important phenomena must be considered—the Sho-
[178] shonean basis of Comanche culture and the effects of the acquisition of the horse and the subsequent "plainsification" of this Shoshonean base culture. Since the similarities which the Comanches share with other Plains tribes are obvious, these will not be exhaustively discussed. Emphasis will be placed on those cultural traits which differentiate the Comanches from other Indian groups of the Plains and which illustrate Shoshonean influences in Comanche culture.

133 The physiography of the generic eastern Shoshonean habitat can be de-
137 scribed as a Basin-Range type, an area of high, arid semidesert with sagebrush and juniper as the predominant floral cover (Kroeber 1939:798). This environ-
174 ment, in its relative meagerness, presented difficulties for peoples who attempted to inhabit it. Subsistence was gained mainly from gathering; seed, bulb, and root collecting; and small-game hunting in the southeastern Basin-Range area. The land could not support a large group of people in one place for any length of time. Therefore, the pattern of small nomadic bands was necessitated. There was no clan organization. Residence after marriage depended on which family had the greatest food surplus at the time. There was no bride price, and marriages were generally unstable, the partners separating at will. Fraternal wife lending occurred, as well as the customary marriage of a deceased wife's sister to the widower. No strict rules of avoidance existed.

Political organization was as rudimentary as social organization. There were no chiefs or councils. Since the old men of the various local groups had from long experience gained a great knowledge of the area, there developed a passive dominance of the aged. The Medicine man or shaman was probably the most influential individual in this culture. The tenuous nature of subsistence provided for elaboration of hunting magic and a dependence on individual and group rapport with the supernatural.

Religious Patterns

Religious patterns included a belief in a vaguely defined Great Spirit who was the fountainhead of all power but who did not interfere in human affairs. This power could be obtained by men through dreams in which a super-

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

natural patron or guardian spirit endowed the petitioner with a certain amount of power and various songs and procedures needed by the recipient to manipulate his Medicine. There was not much transfer of Medicine from individual to individual. Medicine men worked generally in a benevolent manner and received a small fee for their services. There was also a lively ghost fear and a poorly developed notion of the afterlife.

These people were without war patterns before the advent of the horse. They were raided continually by their more warlike neighbors, but they did not develop an institutionalized form of resistance.

Each local group operated in a specific hunting territory, but there were no notions of land ownership and trespassing was not punished. Their dwellings were crude, temporary brush constructions for the most part. Material possessions were also limited in complexity and amount by the rigors of the environment and the difficulties of transportation. Though the dog was present, it was not used for transportation. A family's possessions were usually carried by the women during the march. Women occupied an inferior position in the society, though they were respected for their full share in the food quest.

A Basin-Type Culture

A Basin-type culture, such as has been briefly described and which could be represented by the historic Wind River Shoshone, was the basic stock from which the Comanche sprang after acquisition of the horse and their subsequent movement onto the Plains. It is probable that these Basin people, living on the western fringes of the Plains, made periodic pedestrian hunting expeditions onto the Plains after buffalo or that they were made aware of the desirable qualities of the buffalo from contact with groups which more thoroughly exploited this beast. Shimkin (Trenholm and Cole 1964:17) suggests that the Shoshone may have roamed the Plains area many generations before finally being driven back into the shelter of the Rockies. Therefore, the Comanche advent can be seen as the appearance on the Plains of a mounted Shoshonean people. The Comanche, with the horse and therefore the ability to efficiently exploit the buffalo herds and the Plains environment, built upon culture patterns already sufficient for this type of life style—exaggerating some, modifying some, deleting others, and developing still others.

On the Plains

With these Plains nomads the laurels went to the young and the physically able, while the older people, valued for their wisdom in Shoshone society, faced an old age of declining social prestige and humiliation. And, though the Comanche lacked a pervasive political organization, the war chief, no longer the Medicine man, became the individual who could wield the most power over the most people at any one time. His authority, however, was temporary and transitory. An elderly

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

Their greatest source of irritation during this span of time was the growing white settlements of Texas. It was during this period of increased contact with Texas that the divisions of the Comanche bands into northern, middle, western, and southern began to acquire a new meaning—one couched in terms of degree of acculturation and the hostilities engendered between the tradition-oriented and conservative Comanche bands and the well-acculturated Comanche bands.

As early as 1779 Governor Don Juan Bautista de Anza of New Spain had recognized the highly independent band organization of Comanche society. The term "tribe" had no political significance for the Comanches. Comanche society consisted of a number of independent and sometimes hostile bands which were linked by only the awareness that they were all *nəmənə*, or "The People." Each band exploited a vaguely defined range within the Comanche country and, with the notable exception of the "Quick Stinger" band, never made war on other bands. There were no pervasive political institutions among the Comanche to mold the bands into a political unit. No tribal council, no joint economic activity, and no ceremonial occasion existed that could unite all the bands for even a brief period of time. The various bands even dealt separately with the United States government. The first and last time that a majority of the bands came together was for the occasion of the first Comanche Sun Dance in 1874, held in the dying moments of the old, free nomadic Comanche culture. This first attempt to organize as a tribe, unfortunately for the Comanches, was attempted too late, for by this time the end of the nomadic Comanche life way was but a year in the future.

The Spanish government of New Spain considered the Comanches as being organized into three major bands. The Anglo-Americans also designated three divisions—northern, middle, and southern. Wallace and Hoebel (1925:25) record that Robert S. Neighbors, in 1860, cited the existence of eight Comanche bands; James Mooney later listed thirteen; Robert Lowie in 1912 mentioned only four. The Santa Fe Laboratory group in 1933 was able to gain information concerning thirteen bands. I was able to find evidence of five Comanche bands—*yapai* ("Root Eaters"), *kwahada* ("Antelopes"), *kəmitaiβ* ("Corn White Men"); or *penatɨkə* ("Eating Honey All the Time"), *bonono* ("Hill People"), and *noyaka* or *nokoni* ("Always Moving Around").

Comanche Bands

There is no information on the origins of the various bands or their pre-contact composition and geographical placement. In the following discussion of the major Comanche bands the reconstructed situation is that of the Comanche in their historic territory from approximately the late eighteenth century until the disintegration of the old nomadic Comanche culture in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The largest Comanche band was the *penatɨkə*, or "Honey Eaters," the southernmost Comanche band. At various times they were known as the "Hospitables," "No Meat," "Steep Climbers," "Wasps" or "Quick Stingers," and "Timber People." This band was the vanguard of the Comanches' southward migration.

101 **Comanche.** One of the southern tribes of the Shoshonean stock, and the only one of that group living entirely on the plains. Their language and traditions show that they are a comparatively recent offshoot from the Shoshoni of Wyoming, both tribes speaking practically the same dialect and, until very recently, keeping up constant and friendly communication. Within the traditionary period the 2 tribes lived adjacent to each other in s. Wyoming, since which time the Shoshoni have been beaten back into the mountains by

ASAHABIT—PENATEKA COMANCHE

the Sioux and other prairie tribes, while the Comanche have been driven steadily southward by the same pressure. In this southerly migration the Penateka seem to have preceded the rest of the tribe. The Kiowa say that when they themselves moved southward from the Black-hills region, the Arkansas was the s. boundary of the Comanche.

[p. 327A]